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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000291

SIPDIS

SARAJEVO PASS TO BANJA LUKA

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SUBJECT: GERMANY INTENTLY FOCUSED ON BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

REF: JEFF GIAUQUE GAERC MATERIAL EMAIL -- 03/06/2009

Classified By: DEPUTY COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS STAN OTTO. REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Germany shares our concerns about recent backsliding in Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H), and is engaged regularly with Bosnian leaders at the highest level to press them to fulfill the "Five Plus Two Agenda." Foreign Office contacts stressed that B&H's future is "clearly" in the Euro-Atlantic community, however B&H must demonstrate a willingness to fully implement all necessary steps to reach that goal. Germany is repeating these points through both bilateral and multilateral fora, and they are expected to be included in the March 16-17 GAERC statement. Germany believes the Office of High Representative (OHR) should not be closed until the "Five Plus Two Agenda" is implemented, but also feels strongly that the OHR has nearly outlived its usefulness. German officials agree that EUFOR Althea troop levels should be maintained in Bosnia at least until the OHR is closed, and Germany is actively engaging partners to discourage unilateral drawdowns. END SUMMARY.

BOSNIAN EFFORTS "INSUFFICIENT"

2. (C) PolOff delivered GAERC demarche points to Michael Geisler, desk officer for Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H) at the MFA, March 11. Geisler welcomed the points and noted that Germany remains very active in the Balkans, both politically and militarily. He was pleased that there have been some notable efforts in B&H toward political reconciliation, including the status of Brcko. However, Geisler echoed comments FM Steinmeier made after his meeting March 10 with Slovak FM (and former OHR) Lajcak in Berlin in which he expressed disappointment with the "insufficient" progress on mandated reforms in B&H, particularly the Five Plus Two Agenda.

3. (C) Geisler also expressed particular concern over Republika Srpska's (RS) PM Dodik's increasing secessionist rhetoric in the past months -- especially since reports were published in which Dodik was suspected of being involved in corruption. Dodik's calls to explicitly guarantee the RS's right to succeed are, Geisler reported, "completely unacceptable." Geisler feared that the "notable absence" of an OHR in Sarajevo grants Dodik an opportunity to manipulate the situation to his own political benefit.

OHR NEEDED, AT LEAST FOR NOW

4. (C) Regarding a possible OHR replacement, Geisler admitted that front runner and Austrian Ambassador Valentin Inzko has

certain "limitations" -- including a lack of EU experience -- while emphasizing that his Balkan experience and knowledge of the region remain "second to none" among the potential candidates. When asked if Inzko had the necessary stature to fulfill his duties, both as OHR and eventually as the enhanced EU Special Representative, Geisler noted that the position's stature is directly related to the support it receives from the EU and the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). Geisler hoped that the U.S. would soon announce its support for Inzko's candidacy and noted that Russia had already expressed its willingness to back him.

15. (C) While some effort has been made in B&H toward long-term reconciliation, Geisler emphasized that Germany shares our view that now is not the time to close the OHR, particularly because there has not been "anywhere near enough" movement on the Five Plus Two Agenda. That said, Geisler stated repeatedly that the international community is in a tough spot now; the OHR cannot be closed until the Five Plus Two Agenda is implemented, but at the same time, the OHR has in many ways outlived its usefulness and should be replaced with an EU Special Representative with enhanced responsibilities. He indicated that the wiggle room lays within the definition of the term "implementation."

#### INTENSE PRESSURE THROUGH MESSAGE AND MEETINGS

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16. (C) Geisler noted that Germany is exerting "intense pressure" on B&H -- through the EU and bilaterally -- to complete the Five Plus Two Agenda and demonstrate the will

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and ability to move forward toward political reconciliation and Euro-Atlantic integration. He discussed briefly the visit March 2-4 to Berlin of the leadership of seven B&H political parties who met with MFA State Secretary Reinhard Silberberg and Chancellery National Security Advisor Christoph Heusgen, among others. Both were clear in telling the politicians that B&H needs to take responsibility for its future and that the path toward the EU would require an "enormous effort."

17. (C) MFA State Minister Gernot Erler, in Bosnia March 9-11, delivered the same message in meetings with Presidency Chairman Radmanovic, PM Biscovic, FM Alkalaj, the heads of various political parties, and RS PM Dodik. According to Geisler, Erler emphasized that: B&H's future is in the EU ("the way is clear"); B&H cannot cut corners, either with Dayton or the EU accession process; Dodik's secessionist rhetoric is unacceptable; Partnership for Peace and other programs should be fully utilized to modernize B&H's military, and; there will be no movement forward without the implementation of the Five Plus Two Agenda.

#### TROOPS SHOULD REMAIN

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18. (C) Geisler noted that Germany believes strongly that EUFOR Althea should remain in B&H until the OHR is closed. He added that there is some consternation about Allies unilaterally pulling troops out; Germany is even demarching in European capitals to limit this possibility. He also noted that Silberberg will be in Spain in the coming days and will urge the Spanish to maintain their current troop levels in B&H until the OHR closes. Even then, Geisler noted the need to maintain some of the troops in B&H to advise and assist on modernization efforts.

19. (C) COMMENT: Long active in supporting shared goals in the Balkans, Germany is working hard to deliver the message to Bosnian leaders and politicians that they've got to get to work. Emphasis has turned to stark reminders that it is up to the Bosnians themselves to move their country forward. Even with election season in Germany moving into full gear in the coming months, both coalition parties (SPD and CDU/CSU)

continue to work closely together -- and with the U.S. -- to  
confront problems in Bosnia & Herzegovina head on. END  
COMMENT.  
Koenig